

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SS-15 SP-02 SIL-01 EB-08 CU-04
INR-10 L-03 IO-13 /067 W
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7096

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 CAIRO 09173

STADIS////////////////////////////////////

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (TEXT CORRECTED PARA 4.)

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: ELAB EG US
SUBJECT: FUTURE LABOR PROGRAMMING - AALC VISIT

REF: STATE 59776

SUMMARY. AALC VISIT PRODUCED LETDOWN FOR EGYPTIANS WHEN THEY LEARNED OF MEANY DECISION "DEFER IMPLEMENTATION" OF ASSISTANCE PROMISED BY CHAIKIN AND LEE. EPISODE HAS DAMAGED STANDING OF PRO-U.S. LABOR ELEMENTS AND AGAIN RAISED QUESTIONS IN EGYPTIANS' MINDS ABOUT AFL-CIO DEPENDABILITY. WE CONCERNED BECAUSE WE INVARIABLY DRAWN IN AND ARE FIRST TO SUFFER AFTEREFFECTS WHEN RUG PULLED OUT. ABSENCE OF AFL-CIO ACTIVITIES IN EGYPT WILL NOT AFFECT IMPLEMENTATION OF USG POLICY, BUT INCONSISTENCY OF THIS KIND MAY; WE WOULD PREFER AFL-CIO TO DO NOTHING IN EGYPT IN ABSENCE OF COHERENT POLICY. END SUMMARY.

1. O'FARRELL-FUNK VISIT WAS LETDOWN FOR PRESIDENT SAAD AHMED AND EGYPTIAN FEDERATION OF LABOR. WHEN AALC REPS ARRIVED, AHMED HAD NOT YET RECEIVED LETTER FROM GEORGE MEANY ADVISING HIM THAT PROJECTS PROPOSED DURING
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CHAIKIN-LEE VISIT WOULD BE DEFERRED. AHMED HAD EXPECTED O'FARRELL VISIT WOULD BE STEP TOWARDS THEIR IMPLEMENTATION. AHMED REACTED TO NEWS WITH CONTROLLED BUT EVIDENT CHAGRIN, NOTING HE NOW HAS TO DEAL WITH FRUSTRATED EXPECTATIONS OF HIS TRADE UNION LEADERS. (FROM CONVERSATIONS WITH OTHER LABOR LEADERS DURING S/IL POLLAK'S MARCH 20-23 VISIT, IT APPARENT AHMED HAS

NOT YET PASSED BAD NEWS TO HEADS OF SUBORDINATE UNIONS, SOME OF WHOM CLEARLY EXPECT EXCHANGE PROGRAM TO GO FORWARD.)

2. ACCORDING O'FARRELL, AHMED SAID WITH SOME BITTERNESS THAT HE HAD NOT GONE TO AFL-CIO CONVENTION WITH HIS HAND OUT. AHMED SAW HIMSELF VISITING AS EGYPTIAN LABOR LEADER AT MEANY INVITATION. HE CLAIMS TO HAVE RAISED QUESTION OF ASSISTANCE TO WORKERS UNIVERSITY ONLY WHEN ENCOURAGED TO DO SO BY AFL-CIO REPRESENTATIVES AND WITH KNOWLEDGE AFL-CIO PROVIDES SUCH ASSISTANCE ELSEWHERE. O'FARRELL TELLS US HE SOUGHT TO LIMIT DAMAGE AND STRESS POSITIVE ELEMENTS IN MEANY POSTURE. HE NOTED HE WAS IN EGYPT TO DO "COST ANALYSIS" AND STUDY OF WORKERS UNIVERSITY ASSISTANCE AND THAT MEANY HAD IN FACT NOT CANCELLED ANY OF THE PROGRAMS IN QUESTION. MEANY COULD HAVE EASILY DONE SO AND WOULD NOT HAVE LEFT POSSIBILITIES FOR FUTURE OPPORTUNITY IF HE INTENDED TO CLOSE DOOR TO NORMAL RELATIONSHIP.

3. O'FARRELL REPORTEDLY TOOK CAUTIOUSLY UP-BEAT TONE THROUGHOUT HIS STAY AND VISIT WENT OFF AS SCHEDULED WITH EGYPTIANS EXTENDING USUAL WARM HOSPITALITY. FINAL MEETING BETWEEN AALC REPS AND EXECUTIVE COUNCIL WAS RESTRAINED IN COMPARISON WITH CHAIKIN-LEE SESSION, BUT IT WAS NOT PERMITTED TO PRODUCE EMBARRASSMENT FOR EITHER CONFIDENTIAL

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O'FARRELL OR AHMED. EGYPTIANS STRESSED THAT NORMAL RELATIONS WITH U.S. LABOR ARE NOT CONTINGENT ON ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS BUT, O'FARRELL SAYS, EFFORT OBTAIN ASSISTANCE TO WHICH THEY FELT AFL-CIO COMMITTED WAS EVIDENT. CLEARLY, IT WAS IN AHMED'S INTEREST IN ANY EVENT TO PUT BEST FACE ON VISIT WITH WHICH HE CLOSELY IDENTIFIED.

4. AHMED'S DIFFICULTY NOW WILL BE TO RECOVER FACE HE AND PRO-U.S. GROUP HAVE LOST AS RESULT OF FAILURE OF THEIR "LABOR DIPLOMACY". THIS MAY NOT BE EASY SINCE THIS IS NOT FIRST TIME THEY HAVE BEEN LEFT HOLDING BAG BY AFL-CIO. WE CAN EXPECT AHMED AND OTHERS TO SHOW SKEPTICISM IN FUTURE CONTACTS WITH U.S. LABOR. AFL-CIO/EFL RELATIONS APART, THEY NOW FACE INTERNAL OPPONENTS WHO HAVE ADDED AMMUNITION WITH WHICH TO COMBAT PRO-AMERICAN LEADERSHIP. (LOCAL ILO REP TELLS US AHMED IS OPPOSED BY ONE-FOURTH TO ONE-THIRD OF EXECUTIVE COUNCIL--"ALL LEFTISTS"--WHO CAN BE EXPECTED USE SETBACK IN AFL-CIO INITIATIVE, AS WELL AS AHMED'S INVOLVEMENT IN SADAT VISIT TO JERUSALEM, TO DAMAGE EFL LEADER.)

5. IF EPISODE HAS HURT AHMED, IT HAS ALSO DAMAGED AFL-CIO

STANDING HERE BY CALLING INTO QUESTION LATTER'S
DEPENDABILITY. THIS IS REGRETTABLE, SINCE CLOSER
ASSOCIATION BETWEEN AFL-CIO AND EGYPTIAN LABOR MOVEMENT
COULD BE USEFUL. FOR US AFL-CIO POSITION RAISES QUESTION
OF EXTENT TO WHICH SUCH ASSOCIATION SHOULD BE ENCOURAGED.
THIS SHOULD BE JUDGED IN TERMS OF OUR OVERALL RELATION-

SHIP WITH EGYPT. FACT IS THAT, HOWEVER MUCH EGYPTIAN
LABOR ORGANIZATIONS MIGHT LIKE TO HAVE GREATER CONTACT,
WE CAN LIVE WITH NO AFL-CIO ACTIVITY. WHAT WOULD BE
MORE EMBARRASSING TO US IS SITUATION IN WHICH LABOR

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 CAIRO 09173

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COOPERATION PROGRAMS ARE DEVELOPED WITH EGYPTIAN COUNTER-
PARTS AND THEN HAVE RUG PULLED OUT FROM UNDER THEM
BECAUSE OF AFL-CIO INTERNAL DISAGREEMENTS ABOUT EGYPT.
LATTER SITUATION WOULD LEAVE US EXPOSED AND HOLDING THE
BAG. HENCE, UNLESS WE CAN BE ASSURED OF A REASONABLY
CONSISTENT AFL-CIO POLICY, WE WOULD PREFER AFL-CIO DO
NOTHING HERE. AMBASSADOR MADE THIS POINT TO O'FARRELL
AND FUNK AND WE RECOMMEND DEPT REINFORCE IT AT HIGHER
AFL-CIO LEVELS. EILTS

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